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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
31 July 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: De Gaulle and the Parliament

1. There is increasing evidence of resentment on the part of Gaullist deputies in the National Assembly over the government's dictatorial attitude toward them in pushing unpopular legislation through Parliament. This has led to speculation over the possibility that enough defections might occur from the ranks of the Gaullist Union for the New Republic (UNR) and its left faction, the Democratic Union of Labor (UDT), to deny the government its majority in the Assembly. (The anti-Gaullist majority in the Senate can only delay legislation and must accept the Assembly's final decision.) There were in fact relatively close votes on two specific issues in the final days of the recent session, which traditionally have been marked by parliamentary irritation, but these appear to pose no immediate threat to the stability of the government or to its program. Only one government bill--covering the release of conscientious objectors from military service--did not become law in this session and had to be carried over to the next, which opens on 1 October.

2. The conscientious objector bill is less significant politically than the two others--a bill to regulate strikes by workers in nationalized industries and another to supplement the original budgetary appropriation. Before the spring session ended, the government succeeded in forcing these through at the cost of important cleavages in the government's Assembly majority. The strike bill isolated the UNR/UDT deputies when the non-Gaullist Democratic Center group, which had heretofore supported the government, aligned itself with the opposition. Later, 23 Gaullist deputies, incensed over having to support the appropriations bill when they were not permitted to modify it, demonstrated

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their resentment by a negative vote. Eleven others abstained for the same reason. These unprecedented defections temporarily defeated the measure, but it passed subsequently after Finance Minister Giscard d'Estaing promised further housing credits in the October session.

3. Although the immediate problem was overcome by these concessions, the developing parliamentary opposition may have a long-range effect on UNR cohesiveness. Despite the UNR victory last November on a platform of unconditional support for De Gaulle, the government's formulation of policy without consulting its loyal supporters has made UNR deputies restless. On the electorally sensitive social and economic issues the UNR has been hurt by its inability to implement its promises of social improvements--such as housing credits--at a time when the more flexible non-Gaullist parties are espousing popular but expensive social measures. Labor and agriculture problems will come to the fore again this fall, and De Gaulle gave no indication in his 29 July press conference that he is going to be more flexible in his approach to the demands of these sectors. This will add to parliamentary pressures on the UNR.

4. Centrifugal pressures on the UNR will further increase when De Gaulle leaves the scene. However, with last November's victory in mind, the Presidential elections at the end of 1965, and De Gaulle's personal political plans unknown, few UNR deputies will lightly give up the Gaullist label or deny "unconditional" support to the Gaullist program in the next few months.

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Assembly Group Strengths

The Gaullist Majority:

Union for the New Republic/Democratic Union of Labor (UNR/UDT)	233
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Independent Republicans	34
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The Center-Right Non-Gaullists:

Democratic Center (Composed primarily of the Popular Republicans and Independents)	55
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The Left Opposition:

Democratic Assembly (Composed pri- marily of Radical Socialists and other left splinter groups)	39
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Socialists (SFIO)	68
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Communists (PCF)	40
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No Party	13
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Total Assembly Membership	482
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